AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph at page 6, lines 11-12 as follows:

-- FIGURE 14 is an enlarged partial schematic side elevation diagram showing an exemplary tablet cutter and alignment member of FIGURE 12. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, lines 1-15 as follows:

-- In the highly preferred embodiment including the tablet-guide with the v-shaped cross section and reciprocally-mounted alignment member, the second tablet-alignment element is mounted for movement with an alignment portion at a position along the tablet-guide downstream of the cutter apparatus and the first tablet-alignment element is mounted for movement with an alignment portion at a position along the tablet-guide upstream of the cutter apparatus. Actuator apparatus is provided to move the first and second tablet-alignment elements between at least a first position in which the second tablet-alignment element alignment portion is positioned in the guide and the first tablet-alignment element alignment portion is positioned out of the guide, a second position in which the first and second tablet-alignment element alignment portions [[are]] synchronously move together along the tablet-guide axis to contact a tablet positioned between said portions thereby aligning the oriented tablet for cutting at the cutting position, and a third position in which at least the second tablet-alignment element portion is positioned to avoid engagement with a tablet on the guide surface. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 10, line 28 through page 11, line 2 as follows:

-- The device may include a vacuum apparatus for removing cut-tablet particulates (i.e., dust) from the device. Such a vacuum apparatus may include a fan or other air-flow apparatus positioned to move particulate-containing air away from the cutter apparatus and through at least one filter having at least one surface for removing the cut-tablet particles from the air. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 14, lines 25-30 as follows:

-- As shown in the cut away portion of Figure 6, a second interlock switch 105 may be provided with contact member 107 in position to engage drawer sidewall ~~99~~ 101 such that switch 105 is closed permitting electrical power to energize the alignment and cutter apparatus 53, 55 when drawer 73 is in place. Switch 105 is opened and electrical power to tablet-alignment 53 and cutter apparatus 55 is interrupted when drawer 73 is removed. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 22, lines 15-19 as follows:

-- Arms 235, 237 and alignment portions 231, 233 are mounted so that tablet primary axis 25 is in alignment with tablet guide axis 215 when movement of arms 235, 237 is halted by contact with the tablet 11G. Therefore, the identical synchronous movement of alignment portions 231, 233 toward each other fully aligns the oriented tablet 11G in cavity 221 at a fully aligned position. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 26, lines 17-27 as follows:

-- Figures 15-20 illustrate an exemplary alignment member 179' which is shown positioned along tablet-guide surface 141'. Alignment member 179' includes a body 197' with a tablet-contact surface 199'. Body 197' is preferably elongate and of a generally rectangular shape. Body 197' has an upstream end 291, downstream end 293, a body axis 205' (Figures ~~19,~~ 21 and 22) and tablet-contact surfaces 199a and 199b facing tablet-guide surface 141'. Exemplary tablet-contact surface 199b is flat as shown in Figures 17-20. Body 197' is preferably a one-piece member made of a material selected such that tablet-contact surface 199' has a low coefficient of friction thereby permitting tablet 11F to slide along surface 199' until stopped by coaction of surfaces 199' and 141a, 141b. Suitable low-friction materials include acetal, ABS plastic, polycarbonate, and stainless steel. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 27, lines 15-30 as follows:

-- Support 297 may be mounted for movement in any suitable manner. For example, and as shown in Figure 19, support 297 may be pivotally mounted to a suitable frame element 136 within housing 31 through a hinge 315 provided at a support second end 317 opposite end 299. Suitable movement apparatus, such as a motor in combination with a gear or cam (not shown) or a linear actuator 319, is provided to act against support 297 and to move support 297 in the direction of ~~arrows~~ arrow 321, as shown in Figure 16. Spring 316 is provided to move support 297 in the opposite direction as shown at arrow 323 in Figure 15. In response to appropriate signals from ECU 109, actuator 319 and spring 316 move support 297 (and body 197') between (a) a pre-alignment position (Figure 15), (b) tablet-alignment (Figures 16, 17, 17A), (c) tablet-cutting (Figures 18, 19, 20) and (d) tablet-release (not shown) positions. In the tablet-release position, support 297 is raised in the direction of arrow 321 positioning body 197' entirely out of contact with cut-tablet portions 11Fa, 11Fb in tablet-guide 135' permitting the cut tablet portions to be discharged from the cutting position 255'. The operation of support 297 between these positions is described in detail below. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 32, line 29 through page 33, line 5 as follows:

-- Vacuum apparatus system 355 comprises an exhaust fan 359 mounted along sidewall 39 in a compartment 361. Compartment 361 is defined by sidewall 39, walls 363, 365 and compartment opening 368. Fan 359 is powered by a motor (not shown) and rotation of fan blades 359a, 359b creates a partial vacuum in housing 31 drawing airborne particulates 357 in housing 31 in the direction of arrows 367. Particulates ~~257~~ 357 are removed by a bag-filter 371 and a hepa-filter 375 and particulate-free air is discharged through discharge opening 369 (for example, a louvered grille) provided in sidewall 39. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 35, lines 11-24 as follows:

-- In the first embodiment 10, ECU 109 provides a signal to actuator 189 raising gate 185 in the direction of arrow 191. Tablet 11G moves down lower tablet-guide portion 149 toward wedge-shaped cavity 221 and into alignment position. Tablet 11G moves down guide surface 141 until coaction of surfaces 199 and 141 stop tablet movement. If one end of an elongate, multi-angle, triangular or rectangular tablet (i.e., tablets 11A-11E, 11M-11P) contacts surfaces 199 and 141 before the other end, then such tablet will continue to slide until both ends 16, 17 (or an edge surface 18) are in contact with surfaces 141 and 199 resulting in the tablet being oriented in a first direction with primary axis 19 being aligned parallel to rotary axis 258 and perpendicular to tablet-guide axis 215. A coated, disk or ball-shaped tablet (i.e., tablets 11G, 11I, 11F) will slide toward cavity 221 until tablet surface 15 contacts each of the tablet-contact ~~surfaces~~ surface 199 and guide surface 141 again resulting in orientation of tablet primary axis 19 parallel to rotary axis 258 and perpendicular to tablet-guide axis 215. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 36, lines 1-9 as follows:

-- In the second embodiment 10′ and as shown in Figure 18, ECU 109 provides a signal to actuator 239′ causing each alignment element 193′, 195′ alignment portions 231′, 233′ to be synchronously moved toward the other in the direction of arrows 249′, 251′ until each element 193′, 195′ contacts tablet 11F surface 15. If the tablet is above or below slit ~~183~~ 183′ it is moved by the alignment portions 231′, 233′ until axis 25 is aligned with the slit ~~183~~ 183′ and blade axis 253′. As a result, primary axis 25 is aligned in a direction perpendicular with tablet-guide axis 215′ and coaxially aligned with blade axis 253′. Tablet 11F is now fully aligned for cutting. As with the first embodiment, alignment portions 231′, 233′ or respective elements 193′, 195′ are moved away from aligned tablet 11F before tablet 11F is cut. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 39, lines 14-24 as follows:

-- As shown in Figures 24B and ~~25B~~ 25A, a wedge-shaped cavity 221″, 221‴ is formed between tablet-contact surface 199″, 199‴ and tablet-guide surface 141, 141 provided to orient tablet 11G in the first direction as described with respect to embodiments 10 and 10′. Cavity 221″, 221‴ may be defined in a side elevation (Figures 24B and ~~25B~~ 25A,) by a first tablet-contact plane 223″, 223‴ which is tangent to a surface 199″, 199‴ at the point of contact 225″, 225‴ with tablet 11G and a second tablet-contact plane 227″, 227‴ tangent to the tablet-guide surface 141 at the point of contact 229″, 229‴ with tablet 11G. Cavity 221″, 221‴ has a decreasing cross section from upstream end 137 to downstream end 139 as shown in Figure 17A with respect to embodiment 10. A further wedge-shaped cavity 221b‴ is provided between surface 403b and tablet-guide surface 141‴. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 40, lines 11-21 as follows:

-- The alignment apparatus 53″, 53‴ further include, respectively, alignment elements, similar to alignment elements 193 and 195 of embodiment 10 ~~193″, 193‴ and 195″, 195‴~~ provided to move the oriented, partially aligned tablet 11G in a direction for final alignment and cutting along a plane coincident to axis 25. Except for the alignment portion 233″ and 233‴ of one alignment element (Figures 24C and 25D), such alignment elements are not shown ~~Such elements 193″, 193‴, 195″, 195‴ are present in each embodiment of Figures 24A-24F and 25A-25F but are schematically illustrated only with respect to Figures 24C and 25C~~ in order to provide a clearer illustration of the operation of alignment member 179″, 179‴. Although the profile of alignment portions ~~231″, 231‴~~ 233″ and 233‴ (and the unshown corresponding alignment portion) are ~~is~~ as shown in Figures 24C and 25C, the structure and operation of such alignment elements ~~193″, 193‴, 195″, 195‴~~, including actuator 239, is identical to ~~those~~ alignment elements 193, 195 of embodiment 10 and the description and illustration of such elements is incorporated herein by reference with respect to third and fourth embodiments 10″, 10‴. --

Please amend the paragraph at page 40, line 30 through page 41, line 2 as follows:

-- As is next shown in Figure 24C, alignment portions ~~231″, 233″~~ (i.e., alignment portion 233″ and the corresponding alignment portion) of the alignment elements ~~193″, 195″~~ (i.e., such as 193, 195) synchronously move together to center tablet 11G with primary axis 25 coaxially aligned (i.e., parallel) with tablet-guide 215 and blade axes 253. Alignment ~~portions 231″,~~ portion 233″ and the corresponding alignment portion are retracted following full alignment. --

Please amend the paragraphs at page 41, lines 19-31 as follows:

-- Referring to Figure 25C, after a predetermined time the direction of rotation of body 197''' is reversed causing body 197''' to rotate in the direction of arrow 407. Rotation of body 197''' in the direction of arrow 407 causes tablet 11G to enter cut-out portion 403 and against surface 403a. Coaction of surface 403a and surface 141 forms a cavity ~~221'''~~ 221b''' which is, in effect, a continuation of cavity 221''', and maintains the orientation of partially aligned tablet 11G. Rotation of body 197''' is then stopped temporarily. --

-- Referring next to Figure 25D, tablet 11G is held firmly in cavity 221b''' against tablet guide surface 141 by surfaces 403a and 403b. Alignment portions ~~231,''' 233'''~~ (i.e., alignment portion 233''' and the corresponding alignment portion) of the alignment elements ~~193'', 195''~~ (i.e., such as 193, 195) then synchronously move together to center oriented tablet 11G in the second direction with tablet primary axis 25 coaxially aligned with tablet-guide 215 and blade axes 253. Alignment ~~portions~~ portion ~~231,'''~~ 233''' and the corresponding alignment portion are then retracted away from the now fully aligned tablet 11G. --